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For Immediate Release

Excise Police Arrests Former Town Marshal for Official Misconduct

WESTPORT, Ind. (May 3) – An Indiana State Excise Police officer arrested the former Westport Town Marshal for official misconduct today after an investigation into the officer's conduct on Feb. 5, Super Bowl Sunday.

Former Westport Town Marshal Steven Todd Hampton, 42, was arrested for official misconduct, a felony, as a result of evidence tampering in an investigation by Excise Officer Mike Cruze.

On March 7, excise police received a complaint alleging that Hampton went to the Westport Mini Mart, 102 N. State Road 3, on Super Bowl Sunday and took beer from the store without paying for it. Hampton was on duty and in uniform at the time and drove a marked police car to the store.

After Hampton initially told Officer Cruze that he was investigating the sale of alcohol for carryout on Sunday, Officer Cruze learned that was not the case. During Officer Cruze's investigation, Hampton turned over "evidence" to him: a 12 pack of Bud Light beer that Hampton said was the same 12 pack he had originally obtained during his "investigation" of Sunday carryout on Feb. 5. Officer Cruze later learned the beer Hampton submitted as evidence was purchased by someone else on a later date – not by Hampton on Feb. 5.

Hampton, who resigned on March 21, was arrested by Officer Cruze and an Indiana State Police detective today as the result of two separate investigations into his conduct while Town Marshal. Hampton met Officer Cruze and the trooper at the Decatur County Jail today to turn himself in on the arrest warrants that resulted from the officers' investigations.

"These types of cases are obviously difficult for law enforcement officers to conduct, but they are necessary," Superintendent Matt Strittmatter said. "To ensure the public's trust in law enforcement, police officers must be held to a higher standard."

Indiana State Excise Police officers are the enforcement division of the Indiana Alcohol & Tobacco Commission. While excise officers have the authority to enforce any state law, they focus primarily on enforcing Indiana's alcohol and tobacco statutes.

Decatur County Sheriff Gregory D. Allen assisted Officer Cruze with this investigation.

All criminal defendants are to be presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.